The Student Press

The Student News of Singapore International School (Hong Kong)

FEBRUARY 2024

Issue No. 01

Photo by Mark Yu
Prosperity Tossing

NEWS

SISHK Celebrates Lunar New Year with Record-Breaking Lo Hei Event

By EMMA FANG
Editor-In-Chief

On February 2, the school gathered together for a whole-school Lo Hei (Prosperity Toss) event, undoubtedly one of the many highlights of the school's Lunar New Year Celebrations. An impressive number of 1831 students, parents, and staff of the SISHK community came together for this unique Singaporean tradition, setting a new benchmark in the Singapore Book of Records for "The most number of people doing Lo Hei recitations together".

The event commenced with a traditional Lion Dance performance – a vibrant prelude to the main event. The performance reached its climax as the lions approached the "Choy Cheng" (plucking the greens), where the lions "ate" lettuce and scattered them across the hall to symbolise a fresh start and the spreading of good fortune.

In preparation for the Lo Hei, various ingredients were assembled in a salad, each bearing auspicious symbolism: raw fish for "May you have abundance every year"; lime for "May you have great luck and prosperity"; red carrot for "Good luck is approaching"; green radish for "May you remain forever youthful"; white radish for "May you rise to greater heights"; sesame seeds for "May your business prosper"; golden crackers for "May your floors be covered with gold and riches"; and finally, oil and plum sauce for "May your sources of wealth bring you great prosperity".

"I got to understand the meaning of each of the ingredients added, which made this event a great learning experience for me," said Rachel Lee, an S4 student. "I didn't know much about Lo Hei before this, but now I feel like an expert!"

On cue, everyone tossed the ingredients high up in the air and chanted their well wishes. With each throw, students and teachers alike casted their hopes and dreams into the upcoming year.

Photo by Mark Yu
Lion Dance

"The Lo Hei tossing was so much fun! Throwing the food up high was a blast," said Angela Jiang, an S4 student. "It felt special to share this Singaporean tradition with my friends in school. It's really amazing how a simple tradition can bring people together and create such a lively atmosphere. Plus, I think we all felt a bit of pride in being part of setting a new record!"

The Lo Hei celebration wrapped up on a high note, marking not just a festive celebration but also highlighting the strength and togetherness of the SISHK community. This record-setting event reflected our shared hopes and the positive spirit that will surely pave the way for a successful and prosperous year to come.

Photo by Mark Yu
Fan Dance

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Welcoming the Year of Dragons: CNY Celebration

By CHRISTOPHER GOH
AND CYRUS LEUNG
Staff Writer, Editor-In-Chief

Chinese New Year is one of the most important and widely celebrated festivals in Chinese culture. It is also an event of many different cultural melting pots, making it extremely hard to pull off effectively. On Tuesday, February 6, the whole school gathered in the auditorium for the annual Chinese New Year Celebrations, with students anticipating some predictable and lightly entertaining Chinese readings.

The event far exceeded expectations though. Students gathered in the auditorium awe-struck and their mouths agape by high-octane performers, emblazoned in traditional Chinese cultural ornaments and clothings; the event was a blend of both conventional and modern elements of Chinese and Asian performing arts, a celebration of the evolution of their customs.

The event highlighted many fascinating traditional performances, including a dragon dance led by the teachers, to which the audience erupted in applause and cheers. One of the main performances was the fashion show, which showcased elegant traditional Chinese clothing, such as Cheongsams and Tang suits, which were adorned with intricate embroidery and vibrant colours.

The event concluded in prosperity and affluence, including the appearance of the "财神" (God of Fortune), who are believed to bring blessings of wealth and prosperity for the coming year.

"I sometimes wonder how the CCC is capable of putting up entertaining performances in such a short period of time," said Jacky Guan from S3, "Though to encourage participation of non-chinese listeners, I also think that there should be subtitles, although I do know that this may turn out to be a technical challenge."

With the successful conclusion of the Chinese New Year celebrations, this event celebrated the rich Chinese traditions whilst bringing the school together and fostering a deeper sense of community among students, teachers, and staff.

SPORTS

Photo by Winny Tsoi
SISHK v. YCIS

U16 Basketball Team: A Recap of the Season

By JONATHAN KWONG AND ALEX XUE
Staff Writers

After the SISHK U16 basketball team achieved a promotion from Silver to Gold Division in ISSFHK, they started their season on a high note, scoring back-to-back blowouts against YCIS and HKIS with scores of 33-29 and 55-40 respectively, marking a successful opener for the season.

Regrettably, the Lions' initial victory was followed by a four-game losing streak against ICS, AISHK, KSHK, and lastly, Harrow International School, with a score of 30-40, ultimately falling short on a playoff ticket.

To gain more insights, we interviewed Mr. Drew, the supervising teacher of the U16 Basketball Team.

What comments do you have on the performance of the U16 basketball team?
The team really gave it their all this year and dominated the games that they won. It was great to see how happy the team was the following day at school. Unfortunately, we didn't make it to the finals but we all really learned a lot from every game and can carry that forward into next year's championship.

What do you think are the team's strengths? What do you hope they can improve on?
I have been with the Sec 3s for two years now and I have seen such growth in them. Their ability to stay calm under pressure and choose the right passes has really improved. It was my first year with the Sec 4s but straightaway I could see that they have really good ballhandling and long-range shooting skills. To improve for next year, the team needs to show more adaptability and have a greater range of plays to work with. Teams at this level can work out a tactic quickly and subdue it. Therefore, variety really helps teams win.

Despite some setbacks along the way, the team showed a significant improvement in their performance, considering that it was unable to secure any victories last year. While the results may not have been ideal, the season showcased the team's perseverance, collective efforts, and commitment to excellence, and the experiences gained this year will undoubtedly lay the foundation for future successes.

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FEATURE

Student Highlight: Gavin Wong, DP2

By EMMA FANG
Editor-In-Chief

Gavin Wong is a DP2 student at SISHK whose achievements and contributions to the school community have been significant. Gavin has served as President of the Audio-Visual Committee and the Green Club; in addition to his accomplishments in leadership groups, he has also achieved outstanding results in his IGCSE and IB exams. His hard work and dedication is further recognised by his acceptance into Yale University and the University of Oxford, marking another impressive milestone in his academic journey.

In an interview, Gavin shared with us his journey at SISHK.

What were your favourite subjects in IGCSE and IB, and how have they influenced your future academic or career aspirations?
Personally, the subject that influenced my academic aspirations most was Computer Science, given I hope to further study artificial intelligence (AI) in university; though I also really enjoyed English/World Literature, Biology, and Economics. Looking forward, there are a few sub-fields within AI that I hope to further pursue, including: Explainable AI (XAI) – understanding how AI "thinks" and how human intelligence compares to artificial intelligence; biomedical applications of AI (e.g. AI for cancer detection); and more broadly, how we may regulate AI and manage its effects on society. It's clear that a lot of these emerging fields are highly interdisciplinary – involving neuroscience, medicine, law...etc – and in such a rapidly-changing world, I think it's more important that we explore and stay open to different disciplines in IGCSE, IB, and beyond!

What strategies did you find most effective for preparing for exams and completing coursework, and how did you manage time effectively alongside academic studies and holistic responsibilities?
There's one big answer to this, and I think we all know it...START EARLY! This is especially important for coursework – where you need multiple drafts to refine your writing, and you want to make sure you leave enough time in case you get stuck and want to consult your teacher! As for leadership responsibilities: I find that time-blocking helps. I like to split up my day into 15-minute "blocks", and allocate specific blocks of time to leadership commitments. I also find that listing all my to-dos (and prioritising them) at the start of each day helps me get a big-picture view of how to organise my day. Of course – don't forget time to relax and have fun! No matter how busy my week is, I still try to play football, have hot-pot with friends on Friday nights, and play Valorant on weekends. As long as it's time that you've allocated for relaxing, you shouldn't feel guilty at all – work hard but play just as hard!

What advice would you give to the S3, S4, and DP students currently enrolled in the IGCSE/IB programs?
And now – study strategies:

1. **Do past papers. As many as you can.** Perhaps my biggest piece of advice for IGCSE/IB is to start doing past-papers right from the start. It's so important to study the mark schemes and identify the precise keywords the papers look for – so start early. I'd estimate I did at least 50+ papers for each subject back in IGCSE – which may sound daunting, but if you start early, it's really just 1 paper every 2 weeks – doable, right?
2. **Make your own notes.** It can sometimes feel a bit overwhelming with so many sources of information to refer to – textbooks, slides, the syllabus... etc. I've found the process of making my own notes very useful for consolidating my learning – it becomes very clear which parts you're a little fuzzy about when you're forced to write everything out yourself! Trust me, you'll thank yourself for compiling notes when it comes to revision time.
3. **Remember you're not alone!** In my years at SISHK, I've found all my teachers to be so immensely supportive and so willing to help. I can't even begin to count the times I've sent a late-night email before a test, relied on consultations when stuck on coursework/IAs, or visited the UC office for a 5th-draft of my personal statement. So please, whenever you have any doubts or questions, reach out to your teachers – you may well benefit the rest of your class as well.

What message would you like to impart to the rest of the school?
My last, and most important message: cherish every moment at SISHK. As someone who has called SISHK home for the last 14 years, I think it only really hit me in DP2 that the days of my secondary life were slowly counting down. And to be honest, I'd give anything right now to just be able to spend an extra year here with all my friends. But life moves on – fast. So as much as it may be easy to lose yourself in coursework and leadership responsibilities...just don't forget to enjoy the small moments too. Really make the most out of every moment here, because above all, it's the most treasured memories that you'll be taking away. Wishing all of you the best! :)

Photo by Mark Yu
Attendees enjoying the night

ARTS

Student Council Holds Annual Winter Ball

By NATHAN LIN AND KURTIS HO
Staff Writers

On the evening of January 16, the Student Council held its annual Winter Ball, this time themed "Masquerade", a fresh change from the preceding years' themes of "Enchanted Forest" and "Retro".

The SC selected a series of performances that entertained the guests throughout the night: from the Shifting Radians band to the Rainbow Dance, the hyping crowd greeted each performance with thunderous applause and enthusiastic cheers.

The Winter Ball also featured Preston Chan as the DJ for the night, who effortlessly mesmerised the crowd and kept the dance floor lively throughout the evening. The attendees couldn't help but surrender to the beats and danced to their favourite songs, fully immersed into the exhilarating atmosphere. We spoke with the Student Council exco members to gain insights into the behind-the-scenes efforts that went into the planning and execution of the Winter Ball.

How were you able to achieve such a thrilling atmosphere in Winter Ball this year?

Evelyn Wong (President): We tried to do something different this year... We tried to focus less on the performance aspect and focus more on entertainment in general, that's why we came up with different ideas that were different from previous years, such as cup pong. Though it wasn't super successful, it was still pretty innovative. Then there was the beach ball, which everyone had fun with. And then thirdly there was also the DJ, which I think created the whole energy with everyone jumping and dancing. And lastly it was also a good idea to cut down on performances so that people had more time to spend with their friends.

What were some challenges along the way that set you back in the planning process?

Evelyn Wong (President): The biggest challenge was that in previous years, we didn't do very well so it was hard to get sign-ups although we did try our best to promote it. Additionally, there were times where there was a lack of communication between members.

How did you manage the technical aspects of the event?

Evelyn Wong (President): I think a lot of our coordination with the AV could have been improved. We sent the emails a little too late, I apologise to Ms. Lee for sending the instrument email quite late, I don't think she was very happy with me. I don't think the AV was very happy with us either because we didn't request for spotlights properly, we didn't request for lighting properly, and then on the actual day, there was a band that performed an extra song because everyone was yelling encore, encore. So we didn't really wanna say no, but we understand that it caused a bit of a hindrance to AV.

Do you think next year's Winter Ball will be an even bigger success?

Trooper Liu (Exco): Of course! It was very successful this year so we hope there will be more sign-ups for Winter Ball next year.

Any other feedback related to Winter Ball?

Joyce Sun (Vice President): So I thought that this year's winter was revolutionary! In previous years, students always complained about how Winter Ball is boring and people have nothing to do the whole time. This year though, everyone was more involved, jumping and singing the whole time. Overall, we got a lot of great performances (thanks to the entertainment team) and also a very cool DJ (thanks to Preston) this year.

As the Winter Ball came to a close, the talented performances, Student Council's meticulous planning, and the enthusiastic participation of the attendees left a long-lasting impression on everyone. Overall, the Masquerade-themed Winter Ball of 2024 was a huge success that offered an unforgettable night of enjoyment, festivity, and celebration, and will no doubt be remembered as a highlight of the academic year.

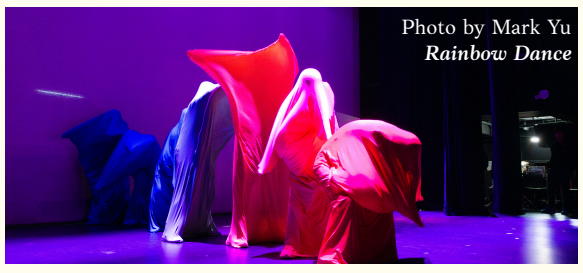


Photo by Mark Yu
Rainbow Dance

Sonder: Rising from the Ashes

By CYRUS LEUNG
Editor-In-Chief

Enveloped in shadow and surfacing from decrepit dust, Theseus would land one final, decisive blow on the head of the minotaur, severing it from the rest of its lacerated body and certifying the finality of his throne. Similarly, and albeit in a less mythological manner- Sonder has also risen from the metaphorical ashes. And for the first time in thousands of years, we may be seeing the post-Covid resurgence of the music scene at SISHK.

Though best known for their performances in external venues such as Lamma Fun Day and the Aftermath, the band "Sonder", similarly longing and intense as their name's meaning, which is defined as the realisation that everybody sees and has a life as full as one's own, were certainly capable of matching many of the already established music artists in the SISHK music scene. Led by Isabel Southergill, a rousing and insanely talented vocalist from HKIS, Sonder had their first official debut at the SISHK Winter Ball this year, followed by collective endearments and the general sentiment that the audience didn't have enough flowers to throw on stage. They were accompanied by dozens of fans who were quickly given a reason to adore them when they kicked off the concluding act of SISHK's annual Winter Ball with the pensive "Ballad of Mona Lisa." The stage was set and lights illuminating as they continued to run down their set list of similarly hard-hitting songs, finally ending off their performance with the hard-to-forget "Shut Up and Dance," where the crowd literally responded by- you guessed it, dancing. They ended the night with fans' encore and a reverberating feeling of stardom that had circulated the entire assembly hall.

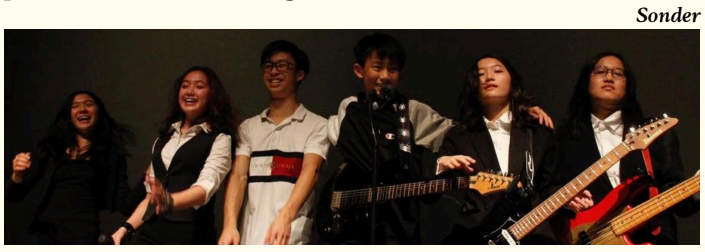
It was certainly a memorable night for all participants who came to watch them; and even amongst shimmering stars who've already cemented themselves in the SISHK music scene, namely Alyssa Jiang and Gary Qin, it's hard to dispute that Sonder shined just as brightly. One member of our student populus, though requesting to be unnamed, surely agrees with the sentiment that Sonder is legitimate.

"They are insane." The student comments loudly, before hastily taking a breath and loudly exclaiming of Sonder's sheer performance skills. "It's like I was paying a premium to watch an Arctic Monkeys concert; they are really really that good." It seems that Sonder has finally filled the void of star power that has been notably missing from the SISHK music scene for some time.

"I felt honoured to promote music at SISHK." Lead Guitarist Serene Leung, would express. "It's really difficult to grapple with an idea of success when you perform, but when you look down at the crowd and see happy faces and excited fans, I think you come really close to that." When we asked her how she felt about future performances at SISHK and emerging as a new set of artists, she expressed enthusiasm, genuine about the future of performance at the school.

"I think we already have super talented artists at the school. There are so many artists willing to experiment and give it their best on stage, and because of that, we're finally starting to reach the point that there is a genuine music scene at school."

Sonder



Coupled with the supportive environment and the energy of the students of SISHK, it's likely that this will not be the last time that SISHK students will see Sonder. Plastered all over social media are their exuberant comments of the environment of the school, and the almost instant reciprocation of their fans on how exhilarating their performances too were. More importantly, we might finally be seeing the rise of more music stars on school campus (and it can't hurt to have more), and the start of a new music scene at the school; one where all talented artists, old or new, get to share the spotlight. We can only hope to see performances of the similar quality as those delivered at this year's AY2324 Winter Ball; with a repeat of the magic accomplished this annum seeming illustrious at best and impossible at worst. But with already established stars singing and strumming their hearts out and the arrival of some of the most musically accomplished and star-stricken group of musicians yet, it might just happen.